

Trexel, Inc. 45 Sixth Road Woburn, MA 01801 USA Tel: 781 932-0202 Fax: 781 932-3324 www.trexel.com
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Trexel Contact:

David Bernstein
President & CEO
Trexel, Inc.
USA (781) 932-0202, Ext. 239
d.bernstein@trexel.com

Trexel Japan Contact:

Yasuhide Sunamura
President and Chairman
Trexel Japan
81-(0) 45-721-8481
trexeljapan@triton.ocn.ne.jp

Asahi Kasei Contact:

Maki Horikoshi
Manager
Asahi Kasei Corporation
81-(0)44-271-2157
horikoshi.mb@om.asahi-kasei.co.jp

Trexel and AsahiKASEI Agree on Amotec®/MuCell® Licensing Program

Molders will have new opportunities to access the Amotec and MuCell Processes

August 12, 2003 Woburn, MA (USA) and Tokyo, Japan. Trexel and Asahi Kasei have reached an agreement whereby licensees of the Amotec Process within Asia only can now obtain a special license directly from Trexel to make Microcellular Foam Products using the Amotec System, and licensees of the MuCell Process outside of Asia only can now obtain a special license through Trexel from Asahi to operate the Amotec Process on MuCell Machines. This agreement was reached after careful research on the part of each company concerning the intellectual property involved in each process.

The Amotec Process was developed by Asahi Kasei to enable precision production of thin-walled parts and moldings with fine surface patterns by using CO₂ gas and gas counterpressure to improve melt flowability and mold surface transfer during injection molding. It is a solid molding process which does not involve the foaming of parts.

The MuCell Process was developed by Trexel, Inc. and uses supercritical CO₂ or N₂ to enable the production of microcellular foamed parts. These parts exhibit reduced stress and improved

dimensional stability and lower costs resulting from the fact that cellular expansion replaces the pack and hold phase during the molding cycle.

According to Mr. Maki Horikoshi, Chemicals Manager, “When Asahi Kasei introduced their Amotec Process, which is a process using supercritical CO₂ and gas counterpressure to reduce surface stresses and prevent surface defects in solid parts, several licensees in Japan and elsewhere noted certain overlap between the Amotec process, a non-foaming process and MuCell, a microcellular foaming process. The question that arose was whether MuCell Systems could be used to practice the Amotec Process and whether Amotec Systems could be used to practice the MuCell Process.”

David Bernstein, President & CEO of Trexel, Inc. noted, “The Amotec System and the MuCell System were not designed to accomplish the same objectives and, therefore, each system is designed to optimize its own process. Nonetheless, it is important to provide plastics molders with as much flexibility as possible to adapt new technologies to their current applications. Amotec customers are welcome to try to adapt the Amotec system to the production of Microcellular Foam Products and can decide for themselves what tradeoffs are involved. At the same time,” he added, “Some of Trexel’s customers have asked for the right to use their MuCell Injection Molding Machines to develop non-foamed products through the Amotec Process.”

Customers who want licenses to run the MuCell Process on their Amotec systems will be able to obtain special licenses from Trexel Japan. Customers who want to run the Amotec Process on their MuCell Machines will be able to obtain licenses from Trexel USA on behalf of Asahi Kasei.

About Trexel

Trexel is the exclusive developer of the MuCell microcellular process technology and has an extensive portfolio of patents in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Japan, Korea, and Asia. Trexel's primary business is licensing the MuCell technology for the production of injection molded and extruded articles. It also provides to licensees world-class engineering support, training and other services, and the equipment and components integral to the MuCell process. In support of these activities, Trexel operates a plastics development laboratory in its Woburn, MA facility. Other MuCell support facilities are located throughout the U.S., Europe, Japan, Korea, and Singapore.

About the MuCell Technology

Trexel's patented MuCell process, which is used worldwide to produce injection molded parts as well as some extruded products, provides significant cost savings and unique quality improvements. By introducing small, precise amounts of supercritical N₂ and carbon dioxide gas into the molten resin during the molding process, the MuCell process enables the otherwise unattainable production of stress free parts that maintain strict dimensional stability.

About Asahi Kasei

Asahi Kasei is one of the major chemical companies in Japan and is now taking positive actions toward licensing Amotec Process globally.